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WILLIAM OSLER

THE MAN

BY

HARVEY CUSHING

BOSTON, MASS.

Reprinted from the Summer Number, 1919
ANNALS OF MEDICAL HISTORY
Published Quarterly by PAUL B. HOEBER
New York

R489.O55 C95

Columbia University
in the City of New York

College of Physicians and Surgeons

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A snapshot of Sir William Osler taken in the Bodleian Library in 1909, holding open Sir William Stirling-Maxwell's copy of Vesal's Tabulae Anatomicae.

WILLIAM OSLER, THE MAN[1]

By HARVEY CUSHING

BOSTON, MASS.

WHATEVER may be said of Sir William Osler in days to come, of his high position in medicine, of his gifts and versatility, to his contemporaries, love of his fellow-man, utter unselfishness, and an extraordinary capacity for friendship will always remain the characteristics which overshadow all else. Few so eminent and so industrious come in return to be so widely beloved for their own sake. Most of us do well with what Stevenson advises—a few friends and those without capitulation —but Osler had the God-given quality not only of being a friend with all, high or low, child or grown-up, professor or pupil, don or scholar, but what is more, of holding such friendships with an unforgetting tenacity—a scribbled line of remembrance with a playful twist to it, a note of congratulation to some delighted youngster on his first publication, the gift of an unexpected book, an unsolicited donation for some worthy cause (and giving promptly he gave doubly), a telegram to bring cheer or consolation, an article to help a struggling journal to get a footing, a cable such as his last on the day of his operation to his old Hopkins friends, which was given by them to the press for

[1] An amplification of a note on Sir William Osler which appeared anonymously in the *Boston Evening Transcript*, January 3, 1920.

the benefit of countless others who shared their own anxiety—all this was characteristic of the man, whose first thoughts were invariably for others.

He gave much of himself to all, and everyone fortunate enough to have been brought in contact with him shared from the beginning in the universal feeling of devotion all had for him. This was true of his patients, as might be expected, and he was sought far and wide not only because of his wide knowledge of medicine and great wisdom, but because of his generosity, sympathy and great personal charm. It was true also—and this is more rare—of the members of his profession, for whom, high or low, he showed a spirit of brotherly helpfulness untinctured by those petty jealousies which sometimes mar these relationships. "Never believe what a patient may tell you to the detriment of another physician" was one of his sayings to students, and then he would add with a characteristic twist—"even though you may fear it is true"; and he was preëminently the physician to physicians and their families, and would go out of his way unsolicited and unsparingly to help them when he learned that they were ill or in distress of any kind. And no one could administer encouragement, the essential factor in the art of psychotherapy in which he was past master, or could "soothe the heartache of any pessimistic brother," so effectively and with so little expenditure of time as could he.

During one of his flying trips to America

some years ago, as always with engagements innumerable, he took time to go from Baltimore to Boston for the single purpose of seeing a surgical friend with literary tastes who for some months had been bed-fast with a decompensated heart; and James Mumford, for it was he, always said that this unannounced visit was what put him on his feet again. I knew of his doing the same thing for an Edinburgh physician of whose illness he heard by chance just as he was leaving the steamer, in Liverpool. He was due for an address before the British Medical Association in Oxford, but without hesitation he took the first train to the north and managed to get back to Oxford just in time for the address, blithe and gay as though he had not spent two nights on a train. Indeed he was invariably punctual and somewhat intolerant of tardiness in others. "Punctuality is the prime essential of a physician—if invariably on time he will succeed even in the face of professional mediocrity."

The universal devotion he engendered was no less true of those with whom he came in contact outside his profession, and his points of contact through his varied interests were innumerable. Man, woman or child—and in children especially he delighted as they did in him—felt from the first moment of meeting a rare fascination in his personality. In a poem, "Books and the Man," dedicated to Osler and read before the Charaka Club, March 4, 1905, Weir Mitchell recalls in these three verses

their first meeting in London twenty years before.

Do you perchance recall when first we met—
And gaily winged with thought the flying night
And won with ease the friendship of the mind,—
I like to call it friendship at first sight.

And then you found with us a second home,
And, in the practice of life's happiest art
You little guessed how readily you won
The added friendship of the open heart.

And now a score of years has fled away
In noble service of life's highest ends,
And my glad capture of a London night
Disputes with me a continent of friends.

On Osler's seventieth birthday, just passed, the medical world set out to do him honor—unknown to him, for he was one to elude public testimonials and did not suffer adulation gladly, quick as he was to give praise to others. For this occasion many of his former pupils and colleagues in Baltimore wrote a number of papers containing the sort of things rarely said or written about a man or his work until after his death. Among these papers is one by his present successor there, on "Osler the Teacher" which deserves quoting in full, but which after an enunciation of his traits ends with this picture of the man as his hospital associates and students remember him.

If you can practice consistently all this, . . . and then, if you can bring into corridor and ward a light, springing step, a kindly glance, a bright word to everyone you meet, arm passed within arm or thrown over the shoulder of the happy

student or colleague; a quick, droll, epigrammatic question, observation or appellation that puts the patient at his ease or brings a pleased blush to the face of the nurse; an apprehension that grasps in a minute the kernel of the situation, and a memory teeming with instances and examples that throw light on the question; an unusual power of succinct statement and picturesque expression, exercised quietly, modestly and wholly without sensation; if you can bring into the lecture-room an air of perfect simplicity and directness, and, behind it all, have an ever-ready store of the most-apt and sometimes surprising interjections that so light up and emphasize that which you are setting forth that no one in the room can forget it; if you can enter the sick-room with a song and an epigram, an air of gaiety, an atmosphere that lifts the invalid instantly out of his ills, that produces in the waiting hypochondriac so pleasing a confusion of thought that the written list of questions and complaints, carefully complied and treasured for the moment of the visit, is almost invariably forgotten; if the joy of your visit can make half a ward forget the symptoms that it *fancied* were important, until you are gone; if you can truly love your fellow and, having said evil of no man, be loved by all; if you can select a wife with a heart as big as your own, whose generous welcome makes your tea-table a Mecca; . . . if you can do all this, you may begin to be to others the teacher that "the chief" is to us.

Little wonder that he was idolized by the students. This was natural enough, but he in turn took pains to know them by name, gave up an evening in each week to successive groups of them at his home, learned them as individuals and never forgot them. And it was the same with his hospital juniors, whether they happened to be members of his own staff or not. Preserved among

some papers I find this characteristic undated note of *circa* 1898, concerning an early effort which had been submitted to him. It is scribbled in pencil on a bit of paper.

> A. A. 1. report! I have added a brief note about the diagnoses. I would mention in the medical report the name of the House Physician in Ward E & the clin. clerk, & under the surgical report the name of the House Surgeon who had charge. We are not nearly particular enough in this respect and should follow the good old Scotch custom. Yours, W. O.

This habit of giving credit to everyone who may have been brought into contact with a case was most characteristic of the man. Even his "Text-Book of Medicine" contains so many references to places and people that it led to these amusing verses taken from a long poem by a student which appeared in the *Guy's Hospital Gazette* some years ago:

For why should it matter to usward,
If Osborn has sent you a screed,
Or why have you sought a brief mention of Porter,
Or Barker, or Caton, or Reed?
I sometimes am seized with a yearning,
In Appleton's ledger to look,
What fun it would be if we only could see
Whether each of them purchased the book!

But when of the names we are weary
(Directories muddle the brain),
We're provided by you with philosophy too
In the trite Aphorisms of Cheyne.
Geography also you teach us,
Until I came under your thrall,
I don't mind confessing that Conoquenessing
I never had heard of at all.

But with all his abundant learning, his high spirits, his playful wit and love of a practical joke, he was incapable of offending. "If you can't see good in people see nothing." Charitable to a degree of others' foibles, even when he had to oppose or to fight in public for a principle he did so without leaving hurt feelings. This lay at the bottom of the great influence he exercised and the universal admiration felt for his character.

Probably no physician during his life has been so much quoted nor so much written about, and the chief periods of Osler's eventful and migratory career are too well known to need more than brief mention.

His father, a clergyman, Featherstone Lake Osler, with his wife, Ellen Pickton, left Falmouth, England, in 1837 and settled in the Province of Ontario. William, the eighth of their nine children, several of whom have become highly distinguished in Canadian affairs and in the law, was born July 12, 1849, at Bond Head. A graduate of Trinity College, Toronto, in 1868, he took his medical degree four years later at McGill University; then after two years of study abroad, returning to Montreal in 1874, he leapt into prominence as the newly appointed Professor of the Institutes of Medicine of his alma mater. A professor at twenty-five, in a chair which covered the teaching of pathology and physiology! And there followed ten years of active scientific work which laid the foundation for his subsequent eminence in his profession.

In 1884 he accepted a position in the University of Pennsylvania, and five years later was called to Baltimore as Professor of Medicine in the newly established Johns Hopkins Medical School. There, marrying in 1892 Grace Revere, the widow of Dr. S. W. Gross of Philadelphia, he remained for sixteen years. It was the Golden Age of the Johns Hopkins during the presidency of Daniel C. Gilman, and during this period through his writing and teaching Osler became recognized, one may say without exaggeration, as the most eminent and widely influential physician of his time.

Many calls to other positions during these years met with refusal until in 1904, when fifty-six years of age, he accepted the Regius Professorship of Physic at Oxford, the most honored post in medicine that the United Kingdom can offer. Though this position on a royal foundation centuries old (Henry VIII, 1546) is a sinecure and was doubtless accepted to give leisure for literary pursuits, he was not one to take advantage of ease. The succeeding fifteen years in Oxford represent, if possible, a period of even greater activity and more far-reaching influence in many directions than the fifteen years at the Johns Hopkins, where despite his absence his stimulating spirit of work for work's sake still reigns.

Established in a delightful home where he and Lady Osler continued to dispense their unbounded hospitality, so much so that 13 Norham Gardens came to be known as the "Open Arms," elected a Fellow of

Christ Church, Woolsey's College, put upon the Hebdomadal Council, a small body which takes the initiative in promulgating all the legislature of the University before its submission to Convocation, he was soon appointed one of the curators of the Bodleian Library, and elected a Delegate of the University Press. There can be no doubt but that these latter positions gave him his greatest extra-professional pleasure and satisfaction during his Oxford life, and to the Library and the Press he gave largely of his time.

But Oxford, with its hoary traditions, its strict adherence to the humanities, its comfortable spirit of *laissez faire*, had drawn into its net a restless spirit who knew the modern outside world, and he was responsible for such changes even in the established procedures of the Bodleian as were thought impossible of accomplishment, if indeed modern library methods were really desirable. But a man, particularly when energetic, unselfish and likeable, who could talk Aristotelian philosophy with the dons at the high table and at the same time knew science and the value of laboratories as well as libraries, could not but leave his impression on the ten centuries, more or less, of Oxford's habits and customs.

There were, indeed, many Oslers: the physician, the professor, the scholar, the author, the bibliophile, the historian, the philanthropist, the friend and companion for young or old. Though no man loved his home more nor kept its doors more widely

open to the world, he was in demand everywhere, and was eminently clubable. Few dinners, of the Samuel Pepys Club, the Roxburghe or the Colophon Clubs, of the inner circle of the Royal Society, of his college, failed to be enlivened by his presence, and he had just been made a member of the famous Johnson Club, one of the oldest and most select dining clubs in existence.

His Oxford home, even more than in Baltimore, had become such a gathering place, particularly for Canadians and Americans, that how the scholar did his work was a mystification to many. An omniverous reader with a most retentive memory, possessed of a rare literary gift and with the power of immediately concentrating on the thing which was to be done, no matter what had occupied his attention the moment before or was laid out to be done the moment after—these were probably the elements of his great productivity.

With it all he was a writer par excellence of countless brief missives—even the fragment pencilled on a postcard during his outings and sent to an unexpecting friend whom some incident had led him to recall, invariably contained some characteristic message, quip or epigram worth preserving. During a brief sojourn in Paris in the winter of 1908–9, he writes:

> I've just been going through the Servetus Trial for Astrology, 1537. 'Tis given in full in du Boulay's History of the University of Paris. I wish you could see this library. I've wasted hours browsing.

Meanwhile I've read through six volumes of Swinburne. I did not know before of his Children's Poems. We are off on the 13th, first to Lyons to see Symphorien Champier and Rabelais. We'll stop at Vienne to call on Servetus and Appolos Revoire, doubtless the father of the late Paul Revere.

He subsequently went down into Italy, and some of the readers of a journal of medical history may like to trail him by a letter and by some picture postcards, on a quarter of which he could squeeze much in his fine writing.

Cannes.

A great coast. Such sunshine. We have been here 1½ weeks—delighted with everything. This is a gorgeous spot. Where I put the + is the little town of Gourdron. They had to get high up on account of the Moors. I am thinking of settling at Monte-Carlo—they say there is a good opening. I lost $.25 in five minutes and then stopped. We go to Rome on the 7th. So far as women are concerned this is the Remnant Counter of Europe. . . .

Milan.

I forgot whether I wrote about the Vesal Tabulæ sex at the San Marco— I think I did. Splendid as illustrating the evolution of his knowledge—also of Calcar as they are very crude in comparison with the 1542. Nothing much in Pavia—nothing in comparison with Bologna and Padua. Library good—no Vesal items of moment, not even the 1543. A 1st ed. of Mundinus, but no plates. I have not been able to locate a single Mundinus MS.—I wonder where they can be. The Ambrosiana here is a fine collection. I had 5 original MSS. of Cardan to look over—the autobiography is complete—he wrote a wonderful hand—no wonder the printers liked to get his copy. Hopli here has no large stock—tho' the best publisher in Italy. Love to the bairns. . . .

Rome.

Rome at last! Wonderful! What pigmies we are in comparison with those old fellows. So much to see and everything intensely interesting. I have not yet been to the Vatican Library. Splendid bookshops here. I have already got some treasures. Redi and Valisneri—splendid editions. So glad of your letter today (11th). Love to the darlings.

Florence.

Yours came this morning—two days late for personal attention to your Lang commission. I was recalled to Rome (stranded American) and I *sanctified* my fee by buying three copies of Vesal. 2nd edition, fine one for myself. A first for McGill (300 fr. was stiff but it goes for 500!) and another for the Frick Library. I was sorry to miss the Rhazes—the Brussels Library secured it. I have two copies also of the Venice edition of the Vesal. Have you one? I will send your list to Lang. They are Germans and know their worth. I bought one *Imperialis* for the sake of the Vesal picture—they have another which I will ask them to send. The Gilbert facsimile is good and the Berengarius. Did I tell you I got the original Gilbert at the Amherst sale? I got a beauty Aristotle 1476 de partibus animalium at Laschers. This place is of overwhelming interest—libraries, pictures, etc. The Laurentian library is just too splendid for words —*7000 chained mss.*, all in the putei designed by Michael Angelo. I have a photo of the end of one for you. The book shops are good. B—— one of the best in Europe. He has 500 incunabula on the shelves, a Silvaticus—a cuss of no moment —of 1476, a superb folio, one of the first printed in Bologna—fresh and clean as if printed yesterday and such a page! but . . . asks 1500 francs. His things are wonderful. But really auction sales (are) is the only economical way to get old books. The dealers have to put up their prices to pay interest on the stock. I am sorry not to have seen the Junta

Galen—there are 5 Venice editions of that firm! By the way the Pitti picture of Vesal is very fine —I am looking for a photo—the beard is tinged with grey. . . .

Re Alcmeon, see Gomperz Greek Thinkers—he was the earliest and greatest of the Magna Graeca anatomists. We go from here to Bologna, Padua, Venice, &c. I have a set of Votives for the Faculty —terra-cotta arms, legs, breasts, yards, eyes, ears, fingers—which the votaries hung in the Æsculapian temples in gratitude to the God— the modern R. C. ones are wretched (tin) imitations.

I am in a state of acute mental indigestion from plethora—it is really bewildering—so much to see and to do.

Naples.

Thus far on the trip. Glorious place—glorious weather. I wish you were *mit*. I dreamt of you last night—operating on Hughlings Jackson. The great principle you said in cerebral surgery was to create a commotion by which the association paths were restored. You took off the scalp—like a *p. m.* incision—made a big hole over the cerebellum and put in a Christ Church—whipped cream —wooden instrument and rotated it rapidly. Then put back the bone and sewed him up. You said he would never have a fit again. I said solemnly, I am not surprised. H-J. seemed very comfortable after the operation and bought 3 oranges from a small Neapolitan who strolled into the Queen-Square amphitheatre! I have been studying my dreams lately and have come to the conclusion that just one-third of my time is spent in an asylum—or should be!

Two years later, in 1911, he made a winter's trip to Egypt and as usual was enthusiastic about all he saw and did. Here is a somewhat longer letter.

S. S. "Seti"

Feb. 22nd, 1911.

Such a trip! I would give one of the fragments of Osiris to have you two on this boat. Everything arranged for our comfort and the dearest old dragoman who parades the deck in gorgeous attire with his string of 99 beads—each one representing an attribute of God! We shall take about 10 days to the Dam (Assouan), 580 miles from Cairo. Yesterday we stopped at Assiut and I saw the Hospital of the American Mission—200 beds, about 20,000 out-patients. Dr. Grant is in charge with 3 assistants and many nurses. I found there an old Clevelander . . . who had fallen off a donkey and broken his ribs, and on the 8th day had thrombosis of left leg. He was better, but at 76 he should have stayed at home. The Nile itself is fascinating, an endless panorama—on one side or the other the Arabian or the Libyan desert comes close to the river, often in great lime stone ridges, 200–800 ft. in height; and then the valley widens to eight or ten miles. Yellow water, brown mud, green fields and grey sand and rocks always in sight; and the poor devils dipping up the water in pails from one level to the other. We had a great treat yesterday afternoon. The Pasha of this district has two sons at Oxford and their tutor, A. L. Smith, a great friend of his, sent him a letter about our party. He had a secretary meet us at Assuit and came up the river to Aboutig. We had tea in his house and then visited a Manual Training School for 100 boys, which he supports. In the evening he gave us a big dinner. I wish you could have seen us start off on donkeys for the half mile to his house. It was hard work talking to him through an interpreter, but he was most interesting—a great tall Arab of very distinguished appearance. A weird procession left his house at 10 P.M.—all of us in eve. dress, which seemed to make the donkeys very frisky. Three lantern men, a group of donkey men, two big Arabs with

rifles and following us a group of men carrying sheep—one alive! chickens, fruit, vegetables, eggs, etc., to stock our larder. We tie up every eve about 8 o'clock, pegging the boat in the mud. The Arabs are fine: our Reis, or pilot, is a direct descendant, I am sure, of Rameses II, judging from his face. After washing himself he spreads his prayer mat at the bow of the boat and says his prayers with the really beautiful somatic ritual of the Muslem. The old Pasha, by the way, is a very holy man and has been to Mecca where he keeps two lamps perpetually burning and tended by two eunuchs. He is holy enough to do the early morning prayer from 4 to 6 A.M. with some 2000 sentences from the Koran. It is a great religion—no wonder Moslem rules in the East. Wonderful crops up here—sugar cane, cotton, beans and wheat. These poor devils work hard but now they have the satisfaction of knowing they are not robbed. We are never out of sight of the desert and the mountains come close on one side or the other. Today we were for miles close under limestone heights—800–1000 feet, grey and desolate. The river is a ceaseless panorama—the old Nile boats with curved prows and the most remarkable sails, like big jibs, swung on a boom from the top of the masts, usually two and the foresail the larger. I saw some great books in the Khedival Library—monster Korans superbly illuminated. The finer types have been guarded jealously from the infidel, and Moritz, the librarian, showed me examples of the finer forms that are not in any European libraries. Then he looked up a reference and said—"You have in the Bodleian three volumes of a unique and most important 16 cent. arabic manuscript dealing with Egyptian antiquities. We have the other two volumes. Three of the five were taken from Egypt in the 17th century. We would give almost anything to get the others." And then he showed me two of the most sumptuous Korans, about 3 ft. in height, every page ablaze with gold, which he said they

would offer in exchange. I have written to E. W. B. Cyclops Nicholson urging him to get the curator to make the exchange, but it takes a University decree to part with a Bodley book! Curiously enough I could not find any early Arabian books (of note) in medicine, neither Avicenna or Rhazes in such beautiful form as we have. I have asked a young fellow at school who is interested to look up the matter. We shall have nearly a week in Cairo on our return. I went over the Ankylostoma specimens with Looss and the Bilharzia with Ferguson—both terrible diseases here (not the men!)—the latter, a hopeless one and so crippling. There were a dozen or more bladder cases in the hospital and the polypous cholitis which it causes is extraordinary. They must spend more money on scientific medicine. Looss has very poor accommodations. The laboratories are good, but the staffs are very insufficient. The hospital is impossible. I am brown as a fellah—such sun—a blaze all day. We reached Cairo in one of those sand storms, the air filled with a greyish dust which covers everything and is most irritating to eyes and tubes. This boat is delightful—five—six miles an hour against the current, which is often very rapid. The river gets very shallow at this season, and is fully eighteen feet below flood level. I have been reading Herodutus, who is the chief authority now on the ancient history of Egypt. He seems to have told all of the truth he could get and it has been verified of late years in the most interesting way. Tomorrow we start at 8 for the Tombs of Denderah—a donkey ride of an hour. We are tied up to one of Cook's floating barge docks, squatted out side is a group of natives and the Egyptian policeman (who is in evidence at each stopping-place) is parading with an old Snider and a fine stock of cartridges in his belt.

P. S. 24th. Have just seen Denderah and the Temple of Hathor. Heavens, what feeble pigmies we are! Even with steam, electricity and the Panama Canal.

What fun to travel with a spirit like this, and he rarely went anywhere without having two or three youngsters on his trail. The summer his Oxford decision was finally made two of us crossed with him, indeed shared the same small stateroom, and, as I recall it, were not permitted to pay our share. We learned something of his methods of work, and had we not been on this intimate basis he would have appeared to us, as to the other voyagers, as the most carefree individual aboard. As a matter of fact he was always the first awake, and we would find him propped up with pillows reading or writing, and his bunk was so cluttered with books during the whole trip that there was scant room for its legitimate occupant. He breakfasted while we dressed, and then went on with his morning's work while the rest of us wandered about the deck with good intentions but usually with an unread book under our arms. At luncheon he would appear; the remainder of the day was a continuous frolic. We roped in the ship's doctor and got up a medical society of the physicians aboard. I find that I have preserved the program which he arranged.

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All this was doubtless very frivolous but he spent no idle hours, and getting enjoyment out of trifles at the proper time and making others participate was as characteristic of the man as his hours of industry when sitting down to the day's work.

Few scholars have received more recognition for their work, few have received so many honors nor carried them so well. With it all he preached and practiced humility. To quote from one of the essays in "Aequinimitas":

> "In these days of aggressive self-assertion, when the stress of competition is so keen and the desire to make the most of oneself so universal it may seem a little old-fashioned to preach the necessity of this virtue, but I insist for its own sake, and for the sake of what it brings, that a due humility should take the place of honour on the list."

His charm as a writer had much to do with his great success as a teacher, and his bibliography, covering a period of 49 years, is most extensive—730 titles, including his collected essays and addresses, having been assembled by Miss Blogg in commemoration of his last birthday. There is a great range of subjects beside those pertaining to medicine and medical history. His "Text-Book of Medicine," of which nearly 200,000 copies have been printed, kept constantly under revision, translated into French, German, Spanish and Chinese and now entering on its ninth edition, was written during his early years in Baltimore and since 1892 has been read—nay devoured—by countless medical students and graduates alike. It remains probably the most used and most useful book in medicine today.

As is well known, his attachment to young men and his fondness for literary allusion once got him into trouble by a

quotation from "The Fixed Period," one of Anthony Trollope's rarer novels, which probably few have read and which is difficult to obtain, as the present writer knows to his cost. Thus the remark about chloroform, really Trollope's, was made in the course of his farewell address to his devoted Baltimore colleagues and friends, many of whom were over 60, an age he was approaching himself. And he would have been the last to have offended them. It was an address full of deep feeling for all that he was soon to leave behind, but the representatives of the press who were present singled out this one remark to be headlined. The sad feature of this episode is that it stands as one of the best examples of the heartlessness of the press when an opportunity offers itself for copy, no matter who may be sacrificed. On the eve of his departure from America the notoriety probably hurt him considerably, though he wisely made no reply, not even at the great banquet which was given him at the time by the profession of the country, on which occasion Weir Mitchell presented him with the rare Franklin imprint of Cicero's "De Senectute." He knew when to keep his tongue as with a bridle.

His Ingersoll Lecture on "Science and Immortality" is a good example of his charming literary style, and there is an interesting story of how he came to accept the lectureship, which others must tell. It was given late in 1904, a few months before his transference to Oxford, when he was in

great demand everywhere and by everyone and could find no time for its preparation. Finally, a few days before the date of the occasion, he slipped away one night to New York, hid in the University Club, and wrote the lecture in a single morning. It is so full of allusion that to appreciate it fully one must read it with the Bible in one hand, the "Religio Medici" in the other, and "In Memoriam" near by. In this he gives his own *confessio fidei* to the effect that, as Cicero had once said, he would rather be mistaken with Plato than be in the right with those who deny altogether the life after death.

At seventy in the forefront of activities innumerable, of unusual physical vigor and buoyancy, coming of a long-lived race, William Osler's death may be regarded as a consequence of the war. No human being loathed strife more than he; few had been as successful in avoiding it in any guise. This characteristic made him suffer unduly from the very outbreak of the conflict. He nevertheless threw himself into it with characteristic energy in connection with the War Office, on committees, in hospitals, and as a senior consultant to the Forces he received a Colonel's commission. The British reply to the famous German professional note issued early in the war was, I believe, written by him and shows the man's spirit and, as always, his charity. The opening and closing paragraphs may be quoted:

> We see with regret the names of many German professors and men of science, whom we

regard with respect and, in some cases, with personal friendship, appended to a denunciation of Great Britain so utterly baseless that we can hardly believe that it expresses their spontaneous or considered opinion. We do not question for a moment their personal sincerity when they express their horror of War and their zeal for "the achievements of culture." Yet we are bound to point out that a very different view of War, and of national aggrandizement based on the threat of War, has been advocated by such influential writers as Nietzsche, von Treitschke, von Bülow, and von Bernhardi, and has received widespread support from the press and from public opinion in Germany. This has not occurred, and in our judgment would scarcely be possible, in any other civilized country. We must also remark that it is German armies alone which have, at the present time, deliberately destroyed or bombarded such monuments of human culture as the Library at Louvain and the Cathedrals at Rheims and Malines. No doubt it is hard for human beings to weigh justly their country's quarrels; perhaps particularly hard for Germans, who have been reared in an atmosphere of devotion to their Kaiser and his army, who are feeling acutely at the present hour, and who live under a Government which, we believe, does not allow them to know the truth. Yet it is the duty of learned men to make sure of their facts. . . .

The German professors appear to think that Germany has, in this matter, some considerable body of sympathizers in the Universities of Great Britain. They are gravely mistaken. Never within our lifetime has this country been so united on any great political issue. We ourselves have a real and deep admiration for German scholarship and science. We have many ties with Germany, ties of comradeship, of respect, and of affection. We grieve profoundly that, under the baleful influence of a military system and its lawless dreams of conquest, she whom we once honoured now

stands revealed as the common enemy of Europe and of all peoples which respect the Law of Nations. We must carry on the war on which we have entered. For us, as for Belgium, it is a war of defence, waged for liberty and peace.

His only child, Revere, an Oxford undergraduate and his father's devoted playmate, who too hated strife, on coming of military age underwent training as a field artillery officer, was commissioned Lieutenant, served with his battery with great credit for a year in France, and was mortally wounded in action September 2, 1917, in the Ypres salient. Thus the great grandson of our Paul Revere who roused Lexington and Concord lies under a wooden cross in Flanders in the corner of a foreign field that is forever England. By a strange coincidence, a group of American officers, who knew what grief this would bring, were there to bare their heads at his Last Post.

From this loss, particularly heartrending to one of his nature, his father never fully recovered. Though unchanged in his outward dealings with people and affairs, he suffered much from insomnia and his health was so undermined that he became an easy prey to an old enemy, bronchial attacks. He finally contracted pneumonia and died suddenly on December 29th from one of its complications which had made an operation necessary.

At the time of the farewell dinner in New York in 1905, Dr. Osler confessed under the emotion of his reply to the tribute that had been paid him, that to few men had happi-

ness come in so many forms as it had come to him; that his three personal ideals had been, to do the day's work well, to act the Golden Rule in so far as in him lay, and lastly to cultivate such a measure of equanimity as would enable him to bear success with humility, the affection of his friends without pride, and to be ready when the day of sorrow and grief came to meet it with the courage befitting a man.

During these last two years, though he must have felt at times, as did his anxious friends, that possibly his span was run, his spirit was unflagging. His son, though essentially an out-of-doors boy, through living in an atmosphere of books acquired bibliophilic tastes of his own and had formed, like Harry Widener at Harvard and Alexander Cochrane at Yale a valuable collection of imprints of the Tudor and Stewart periods. To this collection, Sir William subsequently made many additions from his own carefully chosen books and manuscripts. He and Lady Osler presented the collection to the Johns Hopkins undergraduates as a memorial to their son, to become something like the Elizabethan Club at Yale, a rallying point for young college men with literary and bookloving tendencies. He worked, too, at every odd moment to complete, so far as possible, the unique catalogue of his own lifetime collection of treasures relating to the history and literature of medicine, ranging from a medical tablet from Sardanapolis through a series of priceless manuscripts and incunabulas to the essential contribu-

tions to medicine in their originals of our own time.

This incomparable collection with its elaborate catalogue, which is not a mere enumeration of volumes but is largely biographical, indeed autobiographical in character, is destined for the library of McGill, where he held his first chair in medicine. Sir William as may not be generally known had lately been offered but had refused the position as the head of that great Canadian university. He also received a year ago the amazing offer from both political parties that he stand as fusion candidate for the Oxford seat in Parliament, but refused on the ground that it should in justice be offered to Asquith.

As President of the Classical Association, one of his most notable and, so far as I know, his last address, on "The Old Humanities and the New Sciences" was given before that body in Oxford, May 16th, 1919. That a scientist and physician should become president of the most eminent group of British scholars, whose aim is to "promote the development and maintain the well-being of classical studies" would seem incongruous did one not know the man whose Greek Testament always stood by the "Religio Medici" at his bedside. Disclaiming that he had "ever by pen or tongue suggested the possession of even the traditional small Latin and less Greek," in this remarkable address given in his most brilliant style he makes a plea for no human

letters without natural science and no science without human letters.

It was inevitable that the address should be colored by frequent allusions to the war and appeals for individual service to the community. Quoting Plato's "Republic" that "States are as the men are, they grow out of human characters," he concludes with this paragraph:

> With the hot blasts of hate still on our cheeks, it may seem a mockery to speak of this as the saving asset in our future; but is it not the very marrow of the teaching in which we have been brought up? At last the gospel of the right to live, and the right to live healthy, happy lives, has sunk deep into the hearts of the people; and before the war, so great was the work of science in preventing untimely death that the day of Isaiah seemed at hand "when a man's life should be more precious than fine gold, even a man than the gold of Ophir." There is a sentence in the writings of the Father of Medicine upon which all commentators have lingered, *ἦν γὰρ παρῇ φιλανθρωπίη, πάρεστι καὶ φιλοτεχνίη* — the love of humanity associated with the love of his craft!—philanthropia and philotechnia—the joy of working joined in each one to a true love of his brother. Memorable sentence indeed, in which for the first time was coined the magic word *philanthropy*, and conveying the subtle suggestion that perhaps in this combination the longings of humanity may find their solution, and Wisdom—philosophia —at last be justified of her children.

Two of Osler's lay sermons to students have been published, in which his own life habits are more or less reflected. In one of them given at Yale where he was giving the Silliman Lectures in 1913, he offered "his

fellow students" a way of life—"a path in which the wayfaring man cannot err, a life in day-tight compartments, the main business of which is not to see dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand."

In 1910 "Man's Redemption of Man" was delivered at a service for the students at the University of Edinburgh. Osler unconsciously chose as his text from Isaiah what he himself has been to those who knew him.

> And a man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

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